BRANDED CONTENT

GRADO EN COMUNICACIÓN Y MEDIOS DIGITALES
Professor: SHAHEEN SAMAVATI
E-mail: ssamavati@faculty.ie.edu

Academic year: 18-19
Degree course: THIRD
Semester: 2º
Category: COMPULSORY
Number of credits: 6.0
Language: English

PREREQUISITES
Practical writing, multimedia production and storytelling skills developed through previous coursework including Visual Storytelling, Branding: Identity Strategy and Reputation, as well as Photography and Video Production.

SUBJECT DESCRIPTION
This course explores the transition of brands into publishers, and the importance of branded content in any modern marketing strategy. By delivering consistent, ongoing valuable information to buyers, brands are ultimately rewarded with more business and customer loyalty. This course teaches the process of brand story mining to uncover and implement a content strategy that resonate with a brand’s target audience. Students will also learn how to design a content strategy and editorial calendar to ensure the effective use of branded content across an organization.

OBJECTIVES AND SKILLS
In this course, you will learn how to:
Drive new business for brands through content marketing and native advertising
Create differentiated campaigns that focus on stories audiences will care about
Design a clear over-arching content marketing strategy
Work together as a team to take on the distinct roles within a branded content studio to produce real results
Measure the success of a branded content campaign

METHODOLOGY
This practical course will be focused around a final group deliverable. Lectures, discussions and exercises will prepare you for the ultimate objective of creating a real content strategy and pilot branded content campaign.

In this course you will given the tools and information you need to advise a company on its branded content strategy, develop an editorial calendar and produce the first pieces of content. To prepare you to produce your individual and group deliverables, we will go through step-by-step what it takes to plan and execute a content strategy, and we will study successful cases from top brands to identify best practices you can apply in your work.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching methodology</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Estimated time a student should dedicate to prepare for and participate in</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>13.33 %</td>
<td>20 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>26.67 %</td>
<td>40 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercises</td>
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<td>20 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>33.33 %</td>
<td>50 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other individual studying</td>
<td>13.33 %</td>
<td>20 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>150 hours</td>
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PROGRAM

SESSIONS 1 - 2
Introduction to branded content.
Definition and types of branded content. Explanation of objectives for the course and the final class deliverable: Creating a branded content plan.
Required Reading:
Epic Content Marketing. Part 1: Chapter 1. P. 3-12. (9 pages)
Handout: The Essentials of a Documented Content Marketing Strategy. PDF in CampusOnline. (16 pages)
B.C.: Epic Content Marketing
R.A.: The Essentials of a Documented Content Marketing Strategy
Discussion: Compare and contrast examples of branded content. Which are most effective? Do they inform or entertain?
Individual assignment: Client assessment and market analysis (due before Session 5-6)

SESSIONS 3 - 4
The business model of content marketing
Required reading: Epic Content Marketing Part 1: Chapters 2-6. P. 13-68. (55 pages)

SESSIONS 5 - 6
Attracting loyal subscribers
Peer review client assessments and discuss.

SESSIONS 7 - 8
Defining a content niche and strategy

SESSIONS 9 - 10
Ethics of branded content
Required reading:
"Is It Ethical for a Freelance Journalist to Work in Content Marketing?" (2 pages)
"Content Marketing Done Right". P. 5-21 (16 pages)

R.A.: Is it ethical for a freelance journalist to work in content marketing?
R.A.: Content Marketing Done Right
Exercise and discussion: Ethical or not?

SESSIONS 11 - 12
Introduction to branded content.
Definition and types of branded content. Explanation of objectives for the course and the final class deliverable: Creating a branded content plan.
Required Reading:
Epic Content Marketing. Part 1: Chapter 1. P. 3-12. (9 pages)
Handout: The Essentials of a Documented Content Marketing Strategy. PDF in CampusOnline. (16 pages)
B.C.: Epic Content Marketing
R.A.: The Essentials of a Documented Content Marketing Strategy
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R.A.: Is it ethical for a freelance journalist to work in content marketing?
R.A.: Content Marketing Done Right
Exercise and discussion: Ethical or not?
Managing the content creation process. Building an editorial calendar.

SESSIONS 13 - 14
Content types and formats.
Group exercise: Content types

SESSIONS 15 - 16
Creating a content plan: channels, content and distribution
Group exercise: Content planning

SESSIONS 17 - 18

SESSIONS 19 - 20
Attracting and engaging digital audiences. How to optimize and promote your content campaign.
Targeting your audience. Optimizing SEO. Using the right social channels.
Required reading: Epic Content Marketing. Part 4: Chapters 21-23. P. 231-276. (45 pages)

SESSIONS 21 - 22
Influencer marketing. How tapping into existing audiences can multiply reach.
Required reading: "Influencer Marketing: Strategies, Templates and Tools: P. 4-21 (17 pages)
Other: Influencer Marketing: Strategies, Templates and Tools
Group exercise: Influencer strategy

SESSIONS 23 - 24
Keys to engagement. What motivates readers to share? Headline writing that gets attention.
R.A.: Data Driven Strategies for Writing Effective Titles and Headlines
Individual assessment: Take home headline writing exercise (due by the beginning of next session)

SESSIONS 25 - 26
Measure your audience. How to measure reach and use data to optimize campaigns.
Required reading: Epic Content Marketing. Part 4: Chapter 24. P. 277-298 (12 pages)

SESSIONS 27 - 28
Presentation of group projects

SESSIONS 29 - 30

23th November 2018
Session 29: Final quiz
Session 30: Discussion on key takeaways from the course.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

BUY YOUR BOOKS HERE

Required reading:
Title: Epic Content Marketing
Author: Pulizzi, Joe
Medium: Print or e-book

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS BOOK IS A TEXTBOOK FOR THE CLASS AND MUST BE ACQUIRED BY STUDENTS.

ADDITIONAL READING
Title: Content Rules: How to Create Killer Blogs, Podcasts, Videos, Ebooks, Webinars (and More) That Engage Customers and Ignite Your Business
Author: Handley, Ann and Chapman, C.C.
Publisher / Edition / Year: Wiley, 2012

Lecture Notes
The PowerPoint slides for each class will be distributed before each class through the internet platform CampusOnline.

Additional Materials
Print outs or links to additional resources will be provided as the course progresses. All links to online resources can be accessed in CampusOnline.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The sessions will consist of lectures and practical application of the contents. Most sessions will begin with a lecture, and end with either a class discussion or individual or group exercise related to the lecture. All assignments are mandatory to pass the course and will play an important part in your grade.

There will be two individual exercises, three group exercises as well as a final paper and presentation from your group.

Your groups will each represent a branded content studio that is providing content consulting services to a brand. Each member of the group will take on a role that typically exists in a content studio (Content Strategist, Editor, Copywriter, Producer, Graphic Designer etc.)

Your grade will be determined based on class participation as well as individual and group work. The breakdown is as follows:
Class participation (20%): Participation will be evaluated separately in each session on a scale of 0-10. You will receive a “0” for any sessions you do not attend. The two lowest participation scores will not be included.

Individual assignments (20%): These will be evaluated based on the level of effort and understanding of concepts from the course demonstrated. The two individual assignments are:
  - Client assessment and market analysis
  - Headline writing worksheet

Final quiz (15%) A short quiz testing you on key concepts learned throughout the course.
Group exercises (20%): You will be evaluated based on three written deliverables to be submitted on behalf of your group throughout the course.

Group Final Paper & Presentation (30%): This is the final deliverable for the course and will be evaluated based on:

- Adherence to instructions
- Incorporation of learnings
- Creativity of proposal
- Feasibility of strategy
- Quality of presentation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final quiz</td>
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Attendance policy: Attendance in this course is mandatory and will be monitored daily. Students who do not attend at least 70% of all sessions will automatically fail the course and will lose the opportunity to retake the course. Please be punctual. Anyone who arrives more than 5 minutes late may enter the class, but it will count as an absence in the attendance register.

Laptop policy: Laptops are not required for this course, but may be used to take notes or for in-class writing assignments. Superfluous use of your laptop during class may negatively impact your participation grade.

Plagiarism policy: It is your responsibility to follow IE's policies regarding academic honesty. Plagiarism is, in all cases, a serious academic offence which can result in failing an assignment, failing the course or even expulsion from the University.

Assignment submission policy: All assignments must be handed in punctually on their respective columns on campus online. Tardy assignments will see the grade progressively lowered by one point up to a maximum of 48 hours delay. Assignments submitted after 48 hours or thorough other means (email or otherwise) will be considered incomplete.

Participation policy: Just coming to class is not enough to get a high participation score. You must actively share in class discussions, participate in group activities and come to class prepared with insightful and interesting ideas.

The following criteria will be used to determine your participation grade:

The average level of participation usually satisfies the criteria for a “7”, which would correspond to a “B”.

Grade 0-4,9 Criteria: When present, not disruptive. Tries to respond when called on but does not offer much. Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussion.

Grade 5,0-6,9 Criteria: Demonstrates adequate preparation: knows basic reading facts, but does not show evidence of trying to interpret or analyze them. Offers straightforward information (e.g., straight from the reading), without elaboration or very infrequently (perhaps once a class). Does not offer to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called on. Demonstrates sporadic involvement.

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Grade 7-8,9 Criteria: Demonstrates good preparation: knows reading facts well, has thought through implications of them. Offers interpretations and analysis of reading material (more than just facts) to class. Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way: responds thoughtfully to other students' points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way, offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion. Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement.

Grade 9,0-10,0 Criteria: Demonstrates excellent preparation: has analyzed readings exceptionally well, relating it to other material (e.g., other readings, course material, discussions, experiences, etc.). Offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of class material (e.g., puts together pieces of the discussion to develop new approaches that take the class further). Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students' comments, contributes to cooperative argument-building, suggests alternative ways of approaching material and helps class analyze which approaches are appropriate, etc. Demonstrates ongoing very active involvement.

Course retake policy: Students who fail the course will have an opportunity to retake the course. The retake will consist of an exam and an exercise. In the retake, the maximum grade would not exceed 8 out of 10. Dates and location of the retake will be announced in advance and shall not be changed. Be aware of this when making travel plans.

PROFESSOR BIO

Professor: SHAHEEN SAMAVATI
E-mail: ssamavati@faculty.ie.edu

Shaheen Michelle Samavati obtained her B.A. in Journalism from Ohio State University and later an MBA at IE Business School. She has experience as a newspaper journalist for top American publications including The Wall Street Journal and The (Cleveland) Plain Dealer, where she worked on print and online projects. After her MBA, she worked in corporate communications in the energy sector in Spain before joining the founding team of real estate start-up Spotahome, where she was in charge of the company’s largely inbound marketing strategy. In 2016, she co-founded content marketing agency VeraContent, which works on creative content campaigns for international brands aiming to reach markets across Europe and beyond. As full-time CEO, she leads a team of more than 20 creative professionals based in Madrid. She teaches part-time as adjunct faculty for IE’s School of Human Sciences and Technology.

OTHER INFORMATION

CODE OF CONDUCT IN CLASS

1. Be on time: Students arriving more than 5 minutes late will be marked as “Absent”.
   Only students that notify in advance in writing that they will be late for a specific session may be granted an exception (at the discretion of the professor).

2. If applicable, bring your name card and strictly follow the seating chart. It helps faculty members and fellow students learn your names.

3. Do not leave the room during the lecture: Students are not allowed to leave the room during lectures. If a student leaves the room during lectures, he/she will not be allowed to re-enter and, therefore, will be marked as “Absent”.

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Only students that notify that they have a special reason to leave the session early will be granted an exception (at the discretion of the professor).

4. **Do not engage in side conversation.** As a sign of respect toward the person presenting the lecture (the teacher as well as fellow students), side conversations are not allowed. If you have a question, raise your hand and ask it. If you do not want to ask it during the lecture, feel free to approach your teacher after class.

   If a student is disrupting the flow of the lecture, he/she will be asked to leave the classroom and, consequently, will be marked as “Absent”.

5. **Use your laptop for course-related purposes only.** The use of laptops during lectures must be authorized by the professor. The use of Social Media or accessing any type of content not related to the lecture is penalized. The student will be asked to leave the room and, consequently, will be marked as “Absent”.

6. **No cellular phones:** IE University implements a “Phone-free Classroom” policy and, therefore, the use of phones, tablets, etc. is forbidden inside the classroom. Failing to abide by this rule entails expulsion from the room and will be counted as one absence.

7. **Escalation policy: 1/3/5.** Items 4, 5, and 6 above entail expulsion from the classroom and the consequent marking of the student as “Absent.” IE University implements an “escalation policy”: The first time a student is asked to leave the room for disciplinary reasons (as per items 4, 5, and 6 above), the student will incur one absence, the second time it will count as three absences, and from the third time onward, any expulsion from the classroom due to disciplinary issues will entail 5 absences.